

### MINC Password Changes

Formerly, when the Management Agent's password (access code starts with TPxxxxxx) was suspended, they had to contact this office to have their password reset before they could access MINC. Effective December 8, 2004, additional enhancements to MINC has now made it possible for those owners and managers with TP access codes to reset their own TP access code password.

Steps to "Reset Forgotten/Suspended Password" in MINC can be found on the Message Board at the MINC Home Page. All TP and MA passwords expire every 90 days and you will have to create another password for your ID(s). These passwords must be at least 8 characters and at least one of the characters must be a number (example: *winter04* would be acceptable whereas *applepie* would not). You also cannot reuse the same password for 10 years.

### New 3560 Handbook

It is finally here. The 3560 Handbook streamlines and reengineers those regulations that provide USDA guidance in administering its Multi-Family (MFH) Housing Programs. These programs include Section 515 Rural Rental Housing; Section 533 Housing Preservation Grants; Section 514/516 Farm



Labor Housing Loan/Grant; Section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing; and Section 521 MFH Rental Subsidy program.

The interim final rule was published in the Federal Register on November 26, 2004. You may access this publication at [www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov). Written or email comments on the interim final rule may be received at the addresses identified in the Federal Register through December 27, 2004.

The effective date of final rule is February 25, 2005.



### Project Worksheet Reviews and Adjustments

Thank you to those who are reviewing your worksheets each month via MINC! We are, however, still identifying a large number of discrepancies each month that require correction. This indicates some managers are not reviewing their worksheets. By properly reviewing the worksheets each month, you may be able to avoid costly penalties.

Some of you may have noticed adjustments on your worksheets. These adjustments are typically the result of late tenant actions (i.e. vacates, initial certifications, re-certifications), collection of unauthorized rental assistance, rent increases, or any other adjustments needed subsequent to the release of your worksheet. If you have any questions regarding adjustments and/or any other discrepancies appearing on your monthly worksheet, please contact Jo Hart, MFH Technician, immediately.

**NOTE:** For those owners and/or managers that have MINC access (i.e. a TP access code), the enclosed copy of your monthly project worksheet will be the last one you receive via mail. You are able to view and accept your monthly worksheets via MINC.

### Social Security Benefits

Social Security Benefits will increase 2.7% for calendar year 2005. Each recipient of these benefits is provided with a letter from the

Social Security Administration advising them of the amount of their monthly benefit. You should use the GROSS amount of the benefit as income for the purpose of certifying a tenant's income.

### ***Designated Place List FY2005***

Montana's FY2005 Designated Place List for Section 515 New Construction has been submitted to the National Office for their review and concurrence. If you are anticipating submitting an application for new construction funding in 2005, please contact this office for further information regarding eligible places.



### ***Comprehensive Property Assessment***

A report was prepared under contract with USDA to analyze the Rural Development Multi-Family Housing Program, identify problems, and provide recommendations for changes to address such problems. USDA is in the process of reviewing this report along with other internal reviews to determine what actions, if any, should be taken to modify the current Multi-Family Housing Program.

A copy of the portfolio analysis and Market Assessment Report may be obtained from our website at [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov). Click on the link "Housing and Community Facilities".

### ***Civil Rights Compliance***

Administrative Notice (AN) 4016 to RD Instruction 1901-E was recently published to reinforce guidance to USDA-Rural Development field staff and Multi-Family Housing borrower's regarding Civil Rights and program compliance.

Recipients of Rural Housing Program assistance must implement by-laws and/or

other operating procedures (i.e. Management Plans and Agreements) that contain language prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, and disability.

Recipients of Federal funds who provide housing assistance or services are required to have the fair housing logotype, and slogan, "Equal Housing Opportunity" on their applications forms for tenancy.

Race/National Origin Information must establish a section at the end of the application form, below the signature and date block, to collect race/national origin information. In addition the following disclosure statement shall be included:

*"The information regarding race, national origin, and sex designation solicited on this application is requested in order to assure the Federal Government, acting through the Farmers Home Administration or its successor agency under Public Law 103-354, that Federal Laws prohibiting discrimination against tenant applicants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, age, and handicap are complied with. You are not required to furnish this information, but are encouraged to do so. This information will not be used in evaluating your application or to discriminate against you in any way. However, if you choose not to furnish it, the owner is required to note the race/national origin and sex of individual applicants on the basis of visual observation or surname."*

Recipients using application forms will provide services and benefits in the order applications are received. A current waiting list will be maintained by the date and time an application is received, name of applicant, race/national origin, sex, and a summary of the action taken (i.e. applicant moved-in, applicant contacted but unable to take unit, moved to bottom of waiting list, etc.). MFH Program recipients will follow additional requirements as outlined in Subpart C of Part 1930 for the proper maintenance of a waiting list (RD Instruction 1930-C, Exhibit B, Management Handbook)

Information disseminated to the public must also conform to the following:

**Posters:** "And Justice for All..." posters will be conspicuously displayed at the recipient's

facility, especially in the business/rental office. Additional posters may be posted in the common areas to include hallways, laundry facilities, meeting rooms, etc.

**Printed Materials:** Handbooks, pamphlets, project letterhead, and other materials distributed to the public describing the applicant's or recipient's program or facility explaining the requirements for participation will contain the following non-discrimination clause: "This is an Equal Opportunity Program. Discrimination is prohibited by federal laws. Complaints of discrimination may be filed with the USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14<sup>th</sup> and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (202)720-5946 (Voice and TDD).

If this information is not currently included in all written materials associated with your project, please take steps to have them revised and/or reprinted. At minimum you must include appropriate inserts in your existing materials and publications until such time reprints can be obtained.

Contacts and outreach must be made in the community with local organizations which provide services to persons with disabilities, minority leaders and others knowledgeable of the community to advise them of the availability of services at the project or facility. Any public broadcasts via radio and/or TV must indicate that "Federal laws prohibit discrimination in this program."

A copy of this AN may be obtained from our website at [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov). Click on the link for "Regulations".

### *Tenant Status Changes*

The following reminders regarding tenant documentation is provided:

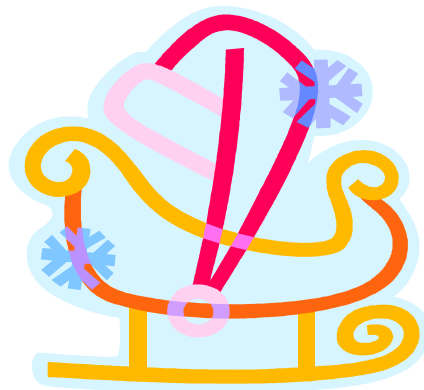
- To be current, tenant certifications (or any other notice of tenant status, i.e. vacate) must be submitted in such manner that it is received in the State Office by close of business of the effective date. This includes transmissions via MINC.

- Tenant vacates cannot be effective on the first of the month. Vacates are effective the date the tenant moves from the unit. If a tenant does leave a unit on the first of a month, they are still considered occupying that unit. The vacate then becomes effective the 2<sup>nd</sup> of that month.
- All sections of the tenant certification must be completed to include signatures and dates. Whiteout and erasures are taboo!!! If you have made an error, you should simply ~~strike through~~ the mistake and re-enter above, below, or to the side of the error.

### *★★Reminder★★*

**Fiscal Year 2005 proposed operating budgets are due in your Servicing Office no later than December 31, 2004. For those of you with access to MINC, these can be "accepted" on-line, to avoid further mailing.**

**For those of you who have not taken the opportunity, please access the MINC website and register at <https://usdaminc.sc.egov.usda.gov/>**



### *Last, But Not Least...*

We would like to thank each and every one of you for your hard work throughout this year. A lot of changes affecting our staff and our customers have occurred. Your patience and cooperation is greatly appreciated. Working together, we will continue to provide affordable housing to very low-, low-, and moderate income tenants, many of which may not have a home without your support. Thank you once again, and from the entire Multi-Family Housing staff, we wish you Happy Holidays and prosperity in the New Year.

*Happy  
Holidays!!*



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USDA-Rural Development is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider, and Employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20250-9410